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U. S. Timed Flight of U-2 To Weather, Not Summit

Aides Say Information Sought by F.B.I. Is Worth the Dangers

By HANSON W. BALDWIN

Favorable weather and the advent of long periods of daylight over northern Russia were important factors in the decision to send a reconnaissance plane over the Soviet Union May 1, just prior to the projected summit conference.

Washington experts explained to this reporter last week the significance of these two factors and described the management system that carefully controlled the reconnaissance flights.

Any scheduled flight could be stopped before the take-off by a simple order from Washington to halt all flights. In the case of the May 1 flight the imminence of the summit conference had not been overlooked, these experts said. It was believed that the information to be gained was so important that it outweighed the political risks involved.

Secretary of State Christian A. Herter indicated last Friday that there had been no Administration policy review on the desirability of continuing U.S. operations over Formosa territory as this morning reference was made.

Mr. Herter, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he had not known personally of the flight on May 1 until he subsequently heard her that the plane had then landed but he extended the duration of the flight to the presumption, based on a ground report,

Mineral Springs has been leased to the Administration by the Government of the United States, and the Government of the United States has agreed to pay the Government of the United States the sum of \$100,000 per annum for the use of the Springs.

[illegible]

Associated Press

Allen W. Dulles

Summit Meeting Delayed

But with the subsequent delay of the summit meeting and of President Eisenhower's scheduled visit to the Soviet Union, it was felt that the flights should be resumed at indefinite suspension, it was here would close off to Washington a source of major information during a vital period.

"Anyway, what would be a satisfactory cut-off date?" an observer asked last week. "Or month, one week, one day before the funeral?"

The U-2 reconnaissance program was under the direct control of the Central Intelligence Agency. Allen W. Dulles, director of the agency, suggested after the May 1 incident that he should take full responsibility for the program, it was decided. However, the President decided to assume full responsibility after various consultations had been made with top officials who had requested it. The program was

[illegible]

Each flight was tested
once, first with the special
"hot" oil, then with the
"normal" oil. The special
oil was found to be
more efficient than the
normal oil in all cases.

This priority targeting list was closely held, however. Paperwork was reduced to a minimum in the interests of security.

Few subordinate officials knew that the U-2 reconnaissance program existed.

Dulles in Charge

Thus, in this sense, every U-2 mission received the policy approval of top officials of the Government before the flight was authorized. Once a flight was placed on the priority list, however, the management and direction of the program necessarily was to a large extent decentralized.

In Washington, Mr. Dulles was the over-all manager and director. A group of Air Force technicians was assigned to his office and there was close liaison between him and the Air Force.

In the field, the operational part of the program was the responsibility of the Air Force and the Central Intelligence Agency. The pilots who flew over the Soviet Union, working on these flights in rotation, were civilians, though most of all of them were former members of the Air Force. The supporting organization was largely drawn from the Air Force.

Once the list of target priorities, which was constantly under revision, reached the various bases where U-2's were stationed, the local commander had a certain amount of latitude about the timing of the flights.

He could, for instance, undertake any one of the top two or three flights listed on the priority list, it was explained. His decision as to which flight to undertake, and when, was dictated in large part by weather reports, the availability of day light over the areas to be photographed and by other intelligence information.

The advent of long spring and summer days in the northern latitudes, after a winter of darkness was an important element in encouraging a resumption of flights over such areas.

In the case of the May flight that ended with the loss of the first U-2 destroyed over a Communist country, there had been indications that the Russians were preparing a spectacular space shot for May Day. There were specific targets to be photographed, ranging from the borders of Afghanistan to the Arctic Group

Other sites important

The U.S. planes, which were piloted by great precision and clarity from 50,000 feet up, reading standard and freedom from any level of effect results. Good weather, a prediction of fine, clear skies of scattered clouds over the route, no rain was therefore always a highly factor in the flight. This was a factor that the pilot was able to control from Washington.

Air Force officials whenever an overflight started, it was explained. However, neither the President nor the Secretary of State would necessarily be informed of the start of each flight.

Washington authorities thoroughly familiar with the U-2 operation feel there can be no justifiable criticism of the program on technical and intelligence grounds, though some of them observe that the Government "talked too much" after May 1.

Trial Plans Not Known

Major interest in Washington continues to be focused on Francis Gary 'Power' pilot of the downed U-2. Up to last Friday United States Embassy officials in Moscow had no response to their request to see Mr. Power. Washington does not even know where the pilot is being held, although he is presumably in Moscow.

Whether he will be brought to public trial is not known. If he is tried publicly, Washington believes, the Soviet Government may attempt to stage a propaganda circus.

The pilot, already probably brainwashed and subjected to psychological and perhaps physical torture may be expected to answer questions exactly as the Russians wish. It is believed that he will probably be presented as a typical representative of "decadent capitalism."

Though this Communist caricature of the truth will be discounted, the question of motivation, of why Mr. Powers acted as he did when his plane was downed, continues to trouble some Washington observers.

Mr. Powers is a new kind of spy, if indeed he can be defined as a spy at all. He wore no uniform and was not in active military service. He did not penetrate the territory of the Soviet Union, as such.

He did fly at high altitude over the Soviet Union and by his own admission, as reported by the Russians, he operated cameras and electronic recording instruments. But no definition of sovereignty as far as air space is concerned has ever been agreed upon. Pragmatically, sovereignty extends upward as far as a nation can enforce its law. Other words to the limit of the range of its anti-aircraft weapons.

Editor & Staffed Technician

Nevertheless, Mr. Powers was a bit of a neophyte, a skilled technician in need of operate the technological instruments of espionage.